

CLAIM AMMENDMENTS

Please amend the Claims as follows. (The following Claim Listing replaces all claims presented heretofore.)

Claims 1-36 (cancelled).

Claim 37 (new). A computer implemented method of providing a clearinghouse for the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain comprising a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user, the method comprising:

paying the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

paying individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by each such individual supply chain participant.

Claim 38 (new). The method of claim 37, and wherein the clearinghouse retains ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain, the method further comprising:

transferring ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user; and

invoicing the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon transferring ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user.

Claim 39 (new). The method of claim 37, and wherein:

each supply chain participant transfers ownership of the goods as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant to the end user; and

the paying of individual supply chain participants occurs upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participants.

Claim 40 (new). The method of claim 39, and wherein the paying of individual supply chain participants is via payment to restricted accounts that allow only use of the payments for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by the individual supply chain participants.

Claim 41 (new). The method of claim 37, and further comprising passing orders for the goods from the end user to each supply chain participant via the clearinghouse.

Claim 42 (new). The method of claim 37, and wherein orders for the goods are passed along the supply chain from one from one supply chain participant to another, beginning with the end user and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant.

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Claim 43 (new). A computer-readable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein configured to cause a computer system to perform the steps of:

provide a financial clearinghouse for the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain identified by a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user;

pay the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

pay individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by such individual supply chain participants.

Claim 44 (new). The computer-readable medium of claim 43, and wherein the computer-readable program code is further configured to:

cause the clearinghouse to retain ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain;

transfer ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user; and

invoice the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon the transfer of ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse to the end user.

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Claim 45 (new). The computer-readable medium of claim 43, and wherein:

each supply chain participant transfers ownership of the goods to the next supply chain participant as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant to the end user; and

the computer-readable program code is further configured to perform the step of paying individual supply chain participants upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participants.

Claim 46 (new). The computer-readable medium of claim 45 and wherein the computer-readable medium is further configured to make payments to the individual supply chain participants via payment to restricted accounts that allow only use of the payments for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by the individual supply chain participants.

Claim 47 (new). The computer-readable medium of claim 43 and wherein the computer-readable medium is further configured to pass orders for the goods from the end user to each supply chain participant via the clearinghouse.

Claim 48 (new). The computer-readable medium of claim 43 and wherein the computer-readable medium is further configured to allow orders for the goods to be passed along the supply chain from one supply chain participant to another, beginning with the end user and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant.

Claim 49 (new). A networked computer system to coordinate the purchase of goods within a supply chain, the supply chain identified by a plurality of serial supply chain participants beginning with a most-upstream node supply chain participant and ending with an end user, the system comprising:

a financial clearinghouse computer;

a plurality of serial supply chain computers, each such serial supply chain computer being associated with one of each such supply chain participants;

and wherein the financial clearinghouse computer is configured to pay, via the serial supply chain computers:

the most-upstream node supply chain participant a material cost of the goods provided by the most-upstream node supply chain participant; and

individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for one or more value-added costs or logistic services added by such individual supply chain participants.

Claim 50 (new). The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein the financial clearinghouse computer is further configured to:

cause the clearinghouse computer to retain ownership of the goods as they move through the supply chain;

transfer ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse computer to and end user computer; and

invoice the end user for the material cost of the goods and the value-added costs and logistic services upon the transfer of ownership of the goods from the clearinghouse computer to the end user computer.

Claim 51 (new). The networked computer system of claim 49, and wherein:

each supply chain participant computer transfers ownership of the goods to the next supply chain participant as the goods move through the supply chain from the most-upstream node supply chain participant computer to the end user computer; and

the clearinghouse computer is further configured to pay individual supply chain participants between the most-upstream node supply chain participant and the end user for one or more of value-added costs or logistic services added by such individual supply chain participants upon transfer of ownership to the individual supply chain participants, and via the respective supply chain participant computers.

Claim 52 (new). The networked computer system of claim 51 and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to make payments to the individual supply chain participant computers via payment to restricted accounts that allow only use of the payments for one or more of material purchases or logistics services incurred by the individual supply chain participants.

Claim 53 (new). The networked computer system of claim 49 and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to pass orders for the goods from the end user computer to each supply chain participant computer.

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Claim 54 (new). The networked computer system of claim 49 and wherein the clearinghouse computer is further configured to allow orders for the goods to be passed along the supply chain from one from one supply chain participant computer to another, beginning with the end user computer and terminating with the most-upstream node supply chain participant computer.

(End of Claims Listing.)

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